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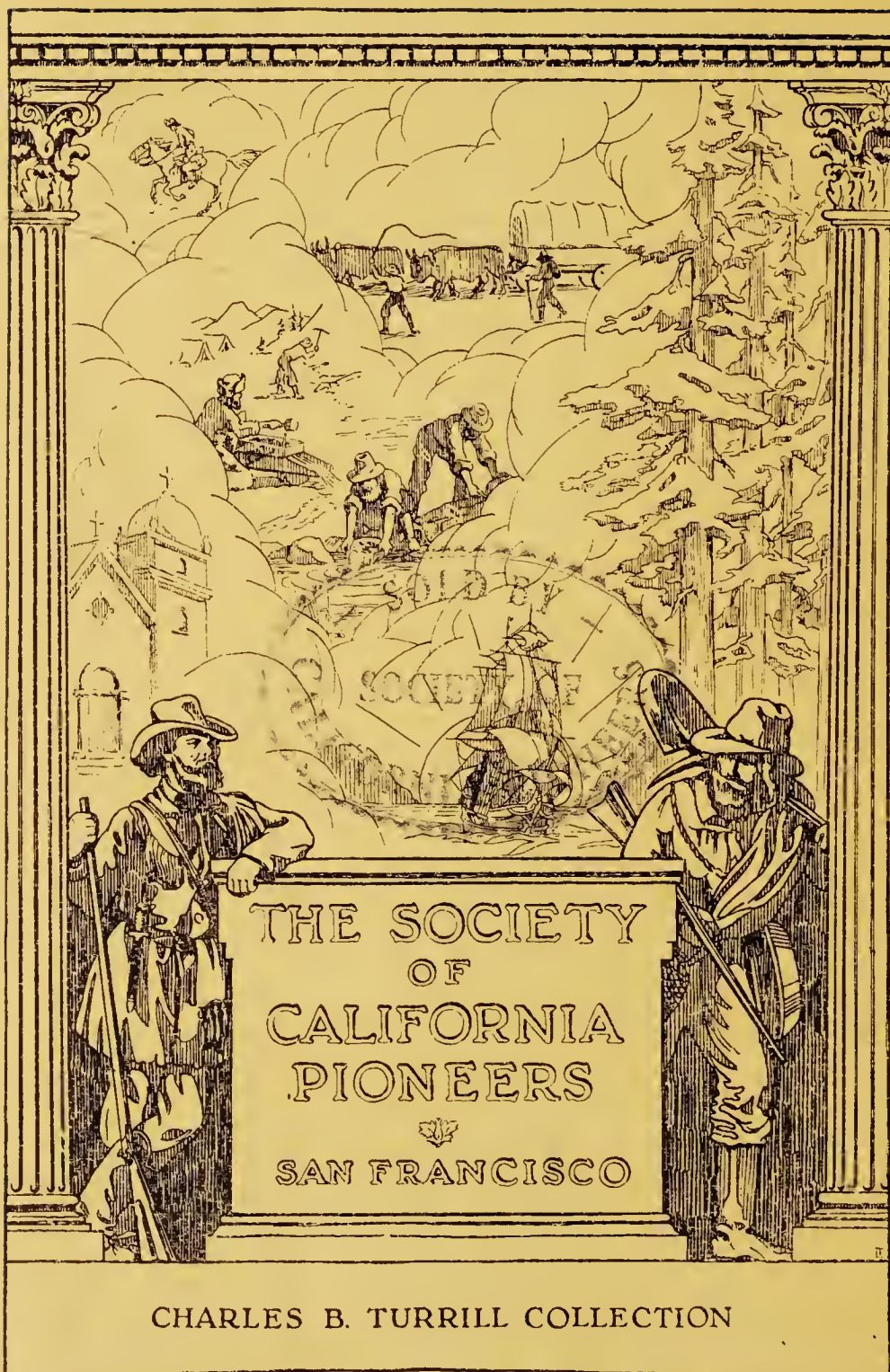
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MISSION PRESIDIO AND PUEBLO of SONOMA

By
HONORIA TUOMEY and LUISA VALLEJO EMPARAN



1823



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Mr. Chas. B. Turrill,
With best wishes,

From

Luisa Vallejo Emparan

Honoria Inomey.

July 4, 1923.




*HISTORY OF THE MISSION
PRESIDIO AND PUEBLO OF
SONOMA*



PADRE JUNIPERO SERRA

Founder of the Franciscan Missions of California



HISTORY

OF THE

Mission Presidio

AND

Pueblo of Sonoma



By

HONORIA TUOMEY AND LUISA VALLEJO EMPARAN



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DEDICATED

TO

*Those Earliest Pioneers of California,
The Franciscan Missionaries,*

AND TO

*All The Noble Pioneer Men and Women
That Followed After,*

AND TO

*The People of Sonoma City and County,
And Especially*

TO THE CHILDREN

~~194~~

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Foreword

Of California, it may be said that every foot is historic and sacred ground. The Sonoma country is extraordinarily rich in tradition and lore. It has long waited a pen adequate to give it full treatment. Such a pen is possessed by the author of the present volume. Miss Tuomey is well known as a writer and author on matters historic, and has associated with her in this work, Mrs. Luisa Vallejo Emparan, daughter of General M. G. Vallejo, founder of Sonoma.

Every student of history in the country will welcome "Mission, Presidio and Pueblo of Sonoma." No one so well as Miss Tuomey is prepared to speak of those stirring and dramatic scenes enacted during the Spanish regime. The founding of the old Mission and the history of the civilization that grew up around Sonoma are interesting in the extreme. The Russian settlement and occupation furnish a chapter in the development of California and of the country all too little known. This is a chapter that none so well as our present author is prepared to tell.

A knowledge of local history is of the greatest

importance to the rising generation. Nowhere can our boys and girls so well as in the school gain that knowledge of men and events so essential to a practice of loyalty and patriotism and good citizenship. The book should find its place in the hands of pupils of the upper grades and Junior High School and upon the shelves of school and public libraries and in the home.

We can think of no better preparation in Americanization; no better foundation for a study of civics; no more adequate basis for appreciation of the labors of those of other nations or those who made present history possible than through reading this book. It is rich in historic coloring, broad in its interpretations and abounds in incidents and happenings of the most intimate nature. It couples interest and authentic recital in such a way as to give satisfaction and information to the reader.

ARTHUR H. CHAMBERLAIN.

CHAPTER I.

Seeking a New Site for the Mission San Francisco de Assis

In the early dawn of a June day in the year 1823, a boat put off from the sandy peninsula on the western shore of San Francisco bay, and its Indian helmsman turned its prow toward the north.

Far back in 1776, Junipero Serra, Padre Presidente of the Missions of California, had sent two friars, the Padres Francisco Palou and Benito Cambon, to found the Mission San Francisco de Assis. When he came, a year later, to pay an official visit, he stood one day on the Presidio grounds, and, gazing across the glittering waters of the Golden Gate at the Marin hills, with fervor thanked God that the good Saint Francis, founder of their Order, had, "with the holy cross of the procession of the Missions," reached the very limits of land bounded by this channel, ending with, "To go farther, we must have boats."

Now, a young Franciscan, but lately arrived from the same part of Old Spain that Junipero

Serra knew in his youth, was embarked upon the same bay of Saint Francis, on his way to commence the work in California's northland that Padre Serra had established so well in her southland.

Padre Jose Altimira was of the fiery and zealous type of apostle, and seemed to feel that he was destined to be a second Serra, to carry forward the work laid down nearly forty years before by its saintly founder, long resting in his tomb under the pavement of the sanctuary of his beloved Mission Carmel.

Not only was Altimira to begin to build the northern chain, but also the last link in the old was to be made the first in the new. The Mission San Francisco de Assis was to be transferred to a new site, yet to be discovered in the great, wonderful wilderness beyond Tamalpais and San Pablo. With it should be joined its asistencia, San Rafael Arcangel, erected in 1817, to constitute the new Mission San Francisco Assis in the north.

Matters had not gone so well of late years with the mission on Dolores creek. The ranchos to the south that had been its chief support were being set apart to settlers. Communicable diseases such as measles and tuberculosis, that came with the white race, had caused many deaths

among the Indian converts. San Rafael Arcangel had been established mainly to receive, in that more genial climate, the sick and ailing from San Francisco Assis.

Padre Altimira had been one of the ministers of San Francisco for three years, and it was he who had most favored the creating of a new mission somewhere in the as yet almost unknown valleys of Petaluma, Sonoma, Napa, and Suisun. In his letter to the Padre Prefect, Senan, he wrote: "San Francisco is on its last legs, and San Rafael cannot subsist alone."

Before the sun was more than risen, Padre Altimira, with Ensign Sanchez as guide and captain, and the diputado, Don Francisco Castro, to represent the civil authority of the Province, was riding away from San Rafael Arcangel, followed by the band of nineteen soldiers forming the body of his armed escort.

All that day, the 25th of June, and every day thereafter till the afternoon of July 3rd, the party of horsemen traveled about the green and flowery northern borders of the bay of San Pablo and its estuaries and the valleys and ranges adjacent. Note was taken of soil, climate, forests, water supply; but, above all, where were located the most populous Indian villages.

On the 28th of June the valley of Sonoma was entered, and here, says Altimira, the finest prospects were seen—climate, location, abundance of wood and stone, the latter supposed by him to be limestone, and, more than all, innumerable springs and streams. To this valley, which the Padre tells us “the Indians called Sonoma,” the party returned again, and yet a third time, when it was chosen as the site for the new mission.

There was another good reason besides the preference given it because of its favor in the eyes of Padre Altimira and his companions, that the valley of Sonoma was selected. It lay conveniently between the valleys of Petaluma and Napa; and it became the plan to make Sonoma the location of the mother mission of San Francisco de Assis, and, soon as practicable, erect branch missions at Petaluma and Napa. The valley of the Suisun, being much farther away, should wait for a time, for its mission.

CHAPTER II.

Founding of the New Mission San Francisco De Assis

July 4, 1823.

On the morning of the 4th of July, the open camp of Padre Altimira, under spreading oaks at the base of the hills on the east side of Sonoma valley, was astir early. A ceremony of moment was to be performed today that required preparation.

Some straight, slender tree limbs were brought, and armfuls of long willow boughs. A long limb was trimmed closely of its twigs. That was the upright of the mission cross. A short piece, also neatly trimmed, was then bound at the regulation space from the top of the upright. A hole was dug at the spot chosen for the site of the church building, and the cross was planted therein.

The willow boughs were stripped of their larger twigs. Stakes of tree limbs were then driven into the ground to form an oblong frame directly in front of the tall cross. The smoothest poles were formed into a skeleton top for the frame. Taking

the willow canes, the men wove, in and out, green walls till the stake frame was quite hidden, excepting at the front. The top was woven with the most care as to evenness of surface and niceness of material.

This wattled object was the altar upon which the mass of consecration was to be celebrated. We are told the groves were God's first temples. The first temples to the Most High on the sites of the Franciscan missions of California were the groves. And the altars erected in those groves were of the living plants at hand. Even in the later times of the missions, and the Sonoma mission was the very last founded, it was more expedient to make a temporary altar on the occasion of the founding. Wattled brush altars were constructed by the Indians up among the barren mountains and lonely desert stretches of Southern California long after the missions had been despoiled and most of them closed, some of them ruined. To those far, melancholy sanctuaries, faithful, devoted padres toiled, to shepherd such shreds of the old flocks as still remained.

Upon the wattled willow altar Padre Altimira spread the linen cloth, after placing beneath it, in the center, the small altar stone. Now the Book,

crucifix, and other required articles were set in place. A meed of recognition is due the patient pack animal that, during the nine days preceding, had borne these necessary things.

Fervent must have been the prayers, and joyful the hymns, the discourse, the volleys of musketry, on that happy morning, when the lands about were blest and the foundations consecrated, of the new Mission San Francisco de Assis, in the chosen valley of Sonoma. This new field was indeed as the Promised Land, rich in all things needful. It is of record that, later, after other friars and civil and military dignitaries had paid visits to the Mission of Sonoma, it was generally agreed that the location was by far the best from there to San Diego.

The background of that memorable scene when church and state took possession of the Sonoma region, was the crowning joy—groups and masses of the wild people of the land, men, women, and children, with handsome forms and countenances more intelligent than any Padre Altimira had seen elsewhere.

Here was what a mission meant—a host of the untaught aborigines to learn of God and their immortal souls, that they might have those souls reunited with God when their bodies should be

stricken with death. Through the cross of Christ must men be saved, and it was that cross the missionary brought, following the Divine command to "go forth and teach all nations."

There, at a little distance, half hidden among trees and flower-brocaded meadows, could be glimpsed, while hymns were sung and sermon preached, the harvest of souls ready for the gleaner. It was a sight to inspire joy in the heart and thrill the soul of a far less ardent seeker after unawakened souls than was Padre Jose Altimira, founder of the new Mission San Francisco de Assis.

CHAPTER III.

The Chain of Spanish Discoverers

1492-1542.

The flag of Spain was first to reach the coast of California.

Christopher Columbus, believing the world round, and seeking by sailing westward to reach the East Indies, discovered America in 1492. Columbus, an Italian, was in the service of Spain, then the world's greatest naval power.

Vasco Nunez de Balboa, in 1513, discovered, from a mountain top in Panama, the blue expanse of the Pacific ocean. Descending to the shore, Balboa, with flag and sword, waded out into the surf and declared all lands bordering on this sea to be possessions of the Spanish crown.

When the news of Balboa's discovery reached Spain, it was not long till a brave and skillful navigator, Ferdinand Magellan, a Portuguese in the Spanish service, was made ready to embark upon the deep and seek a passageway from the Atlantic to this great ocean. The voyage lasted

two years—1519 to 1521—and Magellan's ship succeeded in making the circuit of the earth.

In the same two memorable years of Magellan's voyage, a remarkably brave and able man, Hernando Cortez, learned from the native Cubans that beyond the wide gulf to the westward there was a large and rich mainland. He obtained royal permission, and with ships and men and all else needed, sailed to the coast of Mexico, becoming its discoverer and conqueror.

Cortez found enormous amounts of treasure in Mexico. But there was said to be a wonderful land called California out somewhere in the vast unknown region toward the setting sun. Explorations were begun in several directions trending toward the west. Some of these led to the discovery of Pacific harbors in Mexico.

From one of these harbors there sailed, in 1542, just fifty years after Columbus found the New World, the discoverer of the California of the old stories and the long, patient quests. Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo was sent out to see what he could of the coast of the continent of North America on its western side. Already the continent of South America had been visited by explorers along practically its entire coast line.

Cabrillo was sent out mainly to seek the chan-

nel supposed to separate America from China or from India, or perhaps connect the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. This Strait of Anian, as it was named in advance as if to foster its materialization, was but one of the many supposed features of the geography of the great areas to the cold, far, northwest.

But, although Cabrillo and his faithful pilot, Ferrelo, in turn, tried to penetrate into the higher latitudes, both turned back when about opposite Cape Mendocino. For each made the attempt in the stormy season, when the seas off the bold promontory are rough enough to test the seaworthiness of far stouter craft than the small sailing vessels of the earlier centuries.

California remembers the good and gentle Cabrillo as her discoverer. She knows him as the first man of white blood to pass to the Beyond within her territory. As the result of the hardships encountered on his voyage up the coast of California, he died at the camp made in the winter of 1542-3, on the island of San Miguel, off the coast of Santa Barbara, on January 3, 1543, and was buried somewhere above the beach of Cuyler harbor.

As we pass along the sunny southern coast of Santa Barbara, we pay our homage to the resting

place of Cabrillo, by saluting with a look of love and remembrance, the lone and lofty pile of San Miguel. No grander monument could Cabrillo, a captain of the sea, and the first to rest eyes on the beautiful California shores, desire than the noble rock of San Miguel, swept round by the dazzling, seething seas, the winds for his slumber song, the storm clouds and the enshrouding fogs recalling the dangers of the deep, the flocks and flying lines of sea birds recalling serene days spent in bright havens.

CHAPTER IV.

The Flag of England is Raised in California

1579.

In the year 1578 an English ship entered the Pacific by way of Cape Horn. This vessel was the Golden Hind, commanded by Francis Drake.

Drake's cruise along the west coast of the Americas is of interest to California chiefly from its international aspect. Drake, seeking a harbor in which to repair and provision his ship, entered a bay on the coast of this state, where he, before departing to continue his voyage, raised the flag of England and named the region New Albion, in honor of England, which once was called Albion.

This notable visit of Drake was made to the bay in the lee of Point Reyes, in Marin county, so it is now generally agreed among writers and students of history. For a long time a dispute went on as to the exact location of the bay, some contending that Bodega bay was the scene of Drake's stay of five weeks in the early summer of 1579, while others held to Drake's bay.

Commandante Bodega, on entering, in 1775, the bay to which his name was given, thought it might be the harbor where Drake landed. But on his return from his second voyage to the north in 1779, he visited Bodega bay again, and then Drake's bay, and surveyed and charted the latter. From his new knowledge and observations, he declared that he and Drake were not rivals, that



Outer and Inner Bodega Bay

Drake's bay was Drake's and Bodega bay was Bodega's.

Drake knew of the claim given Spain by the discoveries of Balboa and Cabrillo. But the vast west side of the continent was entirely unoccupied by any but the few Spanish at some of the harbors in Mexico. Elizabeth desired territory

in North America. Here was a fair and fruitful land, with none to say she should not take it. England and Spain, while at peace, were ill friends, and to establish the power of England in the Pacific would checkmate Spain. It would also further the fortunes of Drake at the hands of Elizabeth.

That Drake was shrewd as well as daring and lucky, is proven by his actions throughout that famous voyage around the world, which brought him, among other advantages, the favor of knight-hood from Elizabeth.

The shadow of England's claim to the north coast, especially, of California was not banished till centuries had passed.

CHAPTER V.

The Russians and Spanish are Rivals in the Far North

Admiral Vitus Bering, exploring for Russia, discovered the sea and strait that bear his name, and also Alaska, in 1741. He also discovered that the Alaska waters were alive with the fur seal. In the same year the Russians touched the coast as far south as latitude 56°. Other trips were made in 1765.

When the Spanish authorities awoke to the danger they were in of losing the northwest coast to the hardy and enterprising Russians, they began to prepare to occupy California. King Carlos ordered, among other precautions, that the harbors of San Diego and Monterey, discovered 200 years before, be occupied and fortified.

Here commenced the founding of the missions of California, and the establishing of military posts, pueblos, and the other forms of occupation, by the subjects of Carlos III.

Padre Junipero Serra founded San Diego De

Alcala in 1769, and in the same year Don Gaspar Portola, the governor of the new province, discovered the bay of San Francisco. In 1770, Serra and his military escort founded the Mission San Carlos, the King's Chapel, or Chapel Royal, at Monterey, the new capital of the province.

The Viceroy of Mexico, the wise and excellent Bucareli, after seeing his first expedition northward toward Alaska fail, ordered a second to set out and endeavor to reach latitude 60°, the southern coast of Alaska. This was the famous voyage known in history as the Second Bucareli Expedition, of which Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra is the outstanding figure.

The *Santiago*, a large ship, Captain Heceta, with the sloop *Sonora*, Lieutenant Bodega, departed on this second expedition in March, 1775. Heceta, because many of his crew were sick with the scurvy, returned from latitude 49°. But Bodega, in his small, open boat, keeping his crew in better health and spirits, and heartened by the comradeship of his pilot and diarist, Mourelle, sailed on, till he reached latitude 58°. He then turned back, for winter was near.

In 1778, Captain Cook, exploring for England, made many landings along the coast covered by Bodega.

Again in 1779 Viceroy Bucareli sent ships to reach latitude 60°, selecting Bodega and Areaga. These two intrepid and resourceful young officers achieved success, reaching Alaska and charting the northwest coast, naming many places, and bringing home a valuable record. They had carried the flag of Spain farther north than any other men, before or since.

CHAPTER VI.

The Russians Make Settlements in California

1811.

Though Spanish missions were strung like beads of a rosary from San Diego to San Francisco before the close of the eighteenth century, and four presidios were maintained, the enterprising Russians eventually came down out of the north and settled in California.

In their migration these rude men of beard and brawn made a clear flight from Sitka to Bodega bay. It seems a peculiar turn to this international affair that the bay to which the modest Bodega attached his name, his signature, as it were, to the long list of names he had bestowed, of saints, rulers, patriots, on a hundred other places up to the very huts of Russians in Alaska, should become the location of the first settlement of the next generation of those same Russians.

The Russian-American Fur Company had become a great monopoly and power, occupying all

the Aleutian islands and having one settlement, Sitka, on the American coast. This company wanted a settlement on the California coast, where agriculture could be carried on. It also wanted to trade with the Californians.

The new Chamberlain of the Czar, Nicholi Resanof, arrived in Sitka on official business.



Fort Ross in 1828

Sketch by Duhant Cilley

He found the colony, rich in furs for market, to be well nigh starving for lack of breadstuffs, for their supply of which they had to depend upon far away Russia, by way of Siberia or Cape Horn. The colonists were ill of fever and scurvy, and in a pitiful state generally, on that wet, cold island.

Resanof sailed down to San Francisco early in 1806, and succeeded in obtaining a cargo of solely needed wheat.

On his way past the California coast, Resanof took observations in plenty, and on his return to Sitka, he gave a most favorable account of the



Part of the Old Russian Sled Road between the Village of Kuskoff and Bodega Bay 1811

climate and attractiveness of the coast country of California.

In 1809, a trusted agent of the fur company, Kuskoff, in the ship *Kadiac*, set out, and reached Bodega bay. He had with him 40 Russians and 150 Indians, including 20 women. Some temporary buildings were put up at the bay for the otter hunters and fishermen, and a few at a

beautiful village site in the Salmon creek valley, about six miles inland.

Wheat was sown, and the precious grain harvested by August. Then, with this goodly store, and 2000 otter skins, and other products gathered in the new Land of Plenty, Kuskoff and his men went back to Sitka.

But in 1811 Kuskoff came again, as governor of the new Russian settlements to be made on the California coast. This time he brought 95 men of Russian blood, 25 of them being mechanics, and about 80 Aleuts, in 40 bidaskas, or skin boats, besides all necessary implements and supplies.

In neither of his landings, in 1809 and in 1811, did Kuskoff make a show, or go through a ceremony, of taking possession of the Bodega coast region of California for Russia. That Spain held the territorial rights could not be denied. But since the land was still the home of the Indian, only, and Spain was in no position to uphold her claims by armed force, and the Californians were disposed to trade with them, the Russians came and made themselves at home, not failing, however, to plant many cannon, and keep an arsenal of arms, over which the Russian flag flew.

The inland settlement of Kuskoff in Salmon creek valley was made permanent. Buildings were erected on the bay shore—dwellings and warehouses.

But Kuskoff selected the bold promontory nine



Site of the Russian Settlement of Kuskoff near Bodega 1811

miles north of the mouth of Russian river, for the location of the most important settlement. The situation was ideal for defense, there was a fairly good harbor, abundance of timber, hundreds of acres of almost level land for cultivation, grass ranges, a mild climate.

In September, 1812, Fort Ross, as we call the

Russian settlement, was dedicated with rejoicing and feasting.

The Russian establishments flourished. The hunters and trappers made rich harvests on sea and on land. The farms and shops produced what both the northern colonies and the Californians wanted. For the latter traded with the intruders despite the prohibition of their government, which did not have the military force or equipment in its Pacific province to enforce its oft-repeated mandate to Russia to remove her unwelcome subjects from California territory. The Californians made their Russian neighbors quite welcome, since they supplied the pueblos and missions with many sorts of produce and articles of utility and ornament that these remote subjects of Spain could not have obtained elsewhere. Prohibition does not always prohibit, is a true saying.

CHAPTER VII.

Dedication of the Mission San Francisco Solano

April 4, 1824.

On the afternoon of July 4th, 1823, Padre Altimira and his escort rode back to the Mission San Rafael Arcangel. Next day, they had returned to Old San Francisco, as the establishment on the Arroyo de los Dolores now began to be called.

The tall mission cross and the wattled altar stood in the beautiful oak-covered Sonoma valley, keeping, together, under the sunny sky and the stars of night, their vigil on the spot consecrated to the new Mission San Francisco de Assis.

If the Indians who gathered about the scene of the ceremony wondered whether they should be visited again by the white men, their curiosity was satisfied before the moon had twice reached the phase it showed when the strangers departed.

The Padre Prefect did not at once forward a reply to San Francisco de Assis, the older, in the matter of transferring that and the San Rafael

establishment to the Sonoma valley site, and Governor Arguello grew rather impatient. For he wished the region north of the Golden Gate occupied more extensively, in order that the Russians might be checked in their advance into the interior.

So the Governor ordered Padre Altimira to proceed with the work of founding the new San Francisco. And the zealous founder was eager and willing to obey the order.

On the 25th of August the actual laying of the foundation of the new mission began. Padre Altimira had brought with him an escort of twelve men, an artilleryman to manage a cannon of two-pound caliber, and a number of Indian neophytes. Timber was cut, beams and boards riven, ground prepared.

Before the mission was ready for dedication and after a good deal of correspondence had passed between Governor Arguello, acting Padre Prefect Sarria, and Padre Jose Altimira, a compromise was reached among the three as to the status and jurisdiction of the Sonoma valley establishment.

This compromise made New San Francisco a mission of regular standing, with Padre Altimira as its regular minister; Old San Francisco was

not to be suppressed, and Altimira was still to be its associate minister; San Rafael was to remain a regular mission. Other provisions of this pact of peace had to do with the placing and treatment of neophytes and new converts.



*Mission San Francisco Solano de Sonoma
Before Restoration*

After the compromise had been effected, there arose the question, since the Mission San Francisco de Assis of 1776 was to remain, what name should be given the new mission? It had been christened Francis, and had become known by that name for nearly a year.

Fortunately for the solution of the matter, there are several saints in the calendar of the name Francis. One of these, St. Francis Solano, apostle to the South American Indians some two hundred years before, was chosen as the new patron.

St. Francis, founder of the Franciscan Orders, holy man of Assisi, Italy, remained enshrined at his church on the Arroyo de los Dolores.

On the 4th of April, Passion Sunday, 1824, the dedication ceremonies of the Mission San Francisco Solano took place.

The church was a somewhat rude structure, 24 feet wide and 105 feet long. It was built of boards, and whitewashed. Its interior was well furnished and decorated.

Many of the articles for the celebration of the Divine mysteries and for the ornamentation of the edifice were the gifts of the Russians. Messengers with pack horses had traveled from the Bodega region to Sonoma valley, taking the age-old Indian trail that crossed the head of the Estero Americano, past the twin rock sentinels where the Indians held great councils from time immemorial, that the first Spanish explorers named Dos Piedras, and that we know as Two Rock, or, on our earlier maps, more correctly,

Two Rocks. Across the Llano de los Petalumas and through the hill passes to the south the little train of Russians came till the spot was reached where the fresh white walls of the new temple gleamed through the branches of the oaks.

Then the packs were opened in the presence of the greatly pleased Padre Altimira. We can conjecture what those gifts were, knowing the skill of the Russian artificers, and their constant trade with the Orient. There could be vases, candlesticks, ewer and basin, of hammered brass or copper; hand-carved missal stand and picture frames; possibly a crucifix; quantities of candles; hand-wrought altar linens; embroidered white silk veil for the tabernacle; a mass bell, perhaps from China, similar to that used in the larger chapel at Ross.

Picture the scene at that first offering of the Holy Sacrifice in the church of San Francisco Solano. At the altar the richly robed celebrants; the acolytes in red cassock and white surplice; some Spanish, in their colorful best, at the front with the Russians, at once guests, neighbors, and benefactors, in their thick, fur-trimmed garments; the choir of neophytes, also in colorful dress; the Mexican vacqueros and laborers, gay in many colors; the large gathering of Indians filling the

body of the church, and garbed in such as they possessed that was decent and pleasing.

The Latin of the universal church was intoned at the mass, and in the beautiful Spanish of the Californians the joyful sermon was preached, little understood by most of the congregation except as the animated countenance and eloquent gestures of the speaker conveyed meanings in harmony with the material meaning of a newly erected place of worship.

Two missions to St. Francis was confusing unless the full name was used. And since both San Francisco de Assis and San Francisco Solano are rather too lengthy for convenient use, it soon became the practice to curtail the former to San Francisco and the latter to San Solano.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Independence of Mexico

1823.

Fifteen years before the mission cross was raised in the Sonoma valley, the power of Napoleon Bonaparte had driven King Ferdinand VII from the throne of Spain.

A revolt commenced in most of the Spanish colonies in the Americas. For, while a large proportion of the colonists were loyal and peaceable, the malcontents saw their opportunity, and the revolution spread.

Up out of the surging tide of revolution in Mexico was tossed no less a political head than an emperor. Augustin Iturbide, formerly regent, was crowned emperor on July 21, 1822, with the title of Augustin I.

His most difficult task was to govern that small fraction of his subjects composed of men ambitious for themselves in political matters. Most of the inhabitants of Mexico were, as they are today, Indians, and a people simple and quiet enough

through all their wrongs. Before the slow-traveling mails reached California, Augustin I had become submerged again, and as Iturbide, the exile, had been banished from America.

Then the revolutionists proceeded to form a republic. The new constitution was adopted by the Congress of Mexico on October 4, 1824. But it was not till early in 1825 that Governor Luis Arguello received his copy of the federal constitution. By it, Alta California became the name, and territory the political status, of California, which lacked the population to be classed as a state.

The Mission San Francisco Solano came into being amidst these profoundly disturbing changes.

Whatever may be said of Spanish rule in the American colonies, the missions were generally fostered and protected, while under the government of the republic of Mexico, they were despoiled and ruined.

The final break of Mexico with Spain came just during the months when the energetic, fiery-hearted young Padre Altimira, the second Serra of California, was superintending the building of the new mission. With his own eager hands he had led in the labor of hewing the beams, shap-

ing the adobes, working the horse hair and tough tules into the puddle of adobe that formed the cement for building the dried adobes into the walls of church and outbuildings and quadrangle.

Full as he was with hope that God would bless and prosper his work, yet there was already eating at his soul the fear of what was to come. The missions of California had been founded to convert the Indians. The padres had developed their establishments into vast, prosperous institutions. Out of the results of their toil, sacrifices, and good management, they had not only sustained themselves and their thousands of Indian converts, but also had given a great deal of substantial assistance to the soldiery and their families, to the colonists, to government requirements, to scurvy-stricken sailors, and to all others needing what the hand of devoted charity finds to give.

The mission lands were broad and well husbanded. There were orchards, vineyards, grain fields, gardens. Herds of cattle, sheep and horses covered a thousand hills along the Pacific coast. The Indians had been taught many of the useful trades, and would have reached a greater degree of development in every respect

but for the evil and demoralizing lives and influence of most of the soldiery.

The blossoming lands of the missions had for long been coveted by others, and as the spirit of revolution entered Alta California, the shadow of secularization fell upon the white domes and tile-red roofs, the stately facades and corridors, the cool leafy patios, the fertile, irrigated fields and grassy ranges, of the California missions.

The shadow fell even more darkly on the Indian population, the children of the land, soon to see the whole of California taken by the incoming white man.

CHAPTER IX.

The Monroe Doctrine

1823.

The Russians built up flourishing settlements at Bodega and Ross. Some of the leading colonists settled upon large tracts between Ross and Bodega, and also in valleys to the north and east.

These hardy people sent out fleets of boats, manned by both Russian and Aleutian hunters, to take the sea-otters that literally swarmed in the coastwise waters of the ocean and in the bays lying within the Golden Gate—the Strait of Yulupa, to give it its Indian name.

This otter hunting had yielded richest cargoes since before the beginning of the century, the Russian-American Fur Company having given a number of American ships contracts to procure those valuable skins on the California coast, quite regardless of the frequent protests of the Spanish authorities. The ships made Sitka their port and base, even after the Russians had settlements on the coast of what is now Sonoma county.

After about twenty years of hunting, the otters were quite entirely exterminated. Agriculture became more and more the sustenance of the settlements in the Bodega coast region. More land was needed, new settlements must be made in the interior, if the Russians were to remain and support themselves and send provisions to the colonists at Sitka and in Alaska.

Chamberlain Rezanof had observed, on his voyage from Sitka in 1808, that the region north of San Francisco bay lay unoccupied by the white race, and he became ambitious to have the northwestern quarter of California come under the rule of the Czar, and colonized by Russians.

During the years that followed, the Russian government made overtures to Spain and Mexico, to obtain more territory, but the answer was always a firm refusal: California should not be divided with Russia.

Now comes upon the scene the great power whose western boundary then ran along the summit of the ridge of the Rocky Mountains from Canada to Mexico.

James Monroe was President of the United States when Mexico and the Spanish colonies of Central and South America were struggling with Spain to prevent her from reimposing on them

her former rule, that had been broken by Napoleon in 1808.

The United States acknowledged the independence of all the Spanish colonies in the Americas in the year 1823. It also took action by which it announced to the world its intention to aid, if necessary, these new-born republics in maintaining their freedom. This action consisted in a simple declaration by President Monroe, in part as follows: "The occasion has been judged proper for asserting as a principle that the American continents are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European powers. We should consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety."

This paragraph was directed chiefly at Russia, since the United States held that California belonged, by right of discovery, to Spain, therefore to Mexico on her becoming an independent power, and that from the first the Russians were intruders.

CHAPTER X.

Life at the Mission San Francisco Solano

1823-1834.

Saving pagan souls being the work of the missionary, and "Suffer the little children to come unto Me" being a burning text with the Serra-like Padre Jose Altimira, there were six-and-twenty little Indian children assembled for the rite of baptism on the joyful occasion of the dedication of the Mission San Francisco Solano.

With touching fervor the young friar poured the sacramental water on the heads of those copper-skinned babies; and if any cried, or they all cried in chorus, it can well be imagined that the padre was annoyed not at all, so full was his heart of gladness.

In the same month of April, 1824, thirteen more baby heathens were brought in and christened. They were from the Llano de los Petalumas.

Many of the gentiles, as the Indians in the wild state were called, had been under instruction since the previous year, and in due time these

were ready for the reception of the other sacraments that are administered to adult converts on the occasion of their baptism. Original sin is the only stigma on an infant's soul.

And so the good work was begun, and so it went on for ten years.

Padre Altimira's building program preceding the dedication date, included a number of buildings, all of wood. Besides the chapel, he constructed a padres' house, seven houses for the soldiers and their families, and a large granary.

Adobe buildings were begun, and before the end of the year 1824 the Padre had erected an adobe 30 by 120 feet, with tiled roof and corridor. Two other adobes were ready to roof late in the fall, when the heavy rains set in, and ruined the walls.

Adobe is at once the charm and the tragedy of the Spanish structures. Earth materials, as stone and earth, make walls and towers, arches and corridors, that look as though they had been formed by the always true and sure hand of nature. Roofed with tiles, also earth material, an adobe belongs, from the standpoint of art, to its parent landscape as no wooden building can.

But the tragedy is, that when the heavy tile roof begins to feel the strain of its incline, or is

loosened by an earthquake shock, and tiles slip, slip, slide to earth, till the adobe walls are bared to the rains, ruin soon comes to the whole structure.

But Padre Altimira builded up again the sodden walls. He set up a loom, and weaving woolen cloth was in operation.

A vineyard of 3000 vines was set out, in the peculiarly suitable soil of the Sonoma valley. But early as was this vineyard, it was not the first north of San Francisco bay. For the Russians planted a vineyard in Coleman valley, west of Occidental, that bore good grapes in 1823.

Horses, cattle, sheep and hogs, thrive on the fine pasturage. Crops of wheat and barley were gathered, gardens yielded an abundance of vegetables. An orchard, of several kinds of fruit trees was planted.

The children of the wilds came to the Mission, and there was sent to the establishment, over 500 neophytes from the three missions of San Rafael, San Jose, and San Francisco. Nearly 100 natives had been baptized.

Here was a congregation and a community to please the zealous heart of the devoted Padre Altimira.

There was much work to do, but life at the mission was not all work. The Indians had their hours of recreation and play, at San Solano, as at all the missions. The church services were solemn and elevating, and the neophytes found their souls, and learned who was their Creator and their Savior; why they existed, and whither their spirit might go when their bodies went into the grave. And the Light made them happy and contented.

Padre Altimira was transferred in 1826 from San Solano to San Buenaventura. As his loyalty to Spain, the beloved land of his birth, would not permit him to take the oath of allegiance to the republic of Mexico, he, with another independent spirit, Padre Ripoll, made the only secret departure from Alta California of any of the Franciscan friars of that troublous period. They sailed from San Buenaventura in a trading ship, in 1828, and reached Spain in safety.

Padre Fortuni succeeded to the charge of San Solano. A large adobe church was constructed, of which hardly a brick remains.

A report made in 1830 shows the growth of this mission. There were 2000 cattle, 725 horses, 4000 sheep, a large number of hogs. Crops averaged about 2000 bushels. Six hundred and fifty Indi-

ans had been baptized, and 375 buried. There were 760 neophytes.

Colonization by the Spanish and Mexicans began now at the Mission San Francisco Solano, as at all the other missions, and with the same unhappy result to the Indians, for whom the missions were founded.

Father Fortuni served at San Francisco Solano until 1833, when his place was taken by Father Gutierrez, who in turn changed places, in March, 1834, with Padre Lorenzo Quijas of San Francisco de Assis, who, after secularization, resided at the Mission San Rafael Arcangel, the Mission San Francisco Solano having been closed.

CHAPTER XI.

Founding of the Presidio and Pueblo of Sonoma

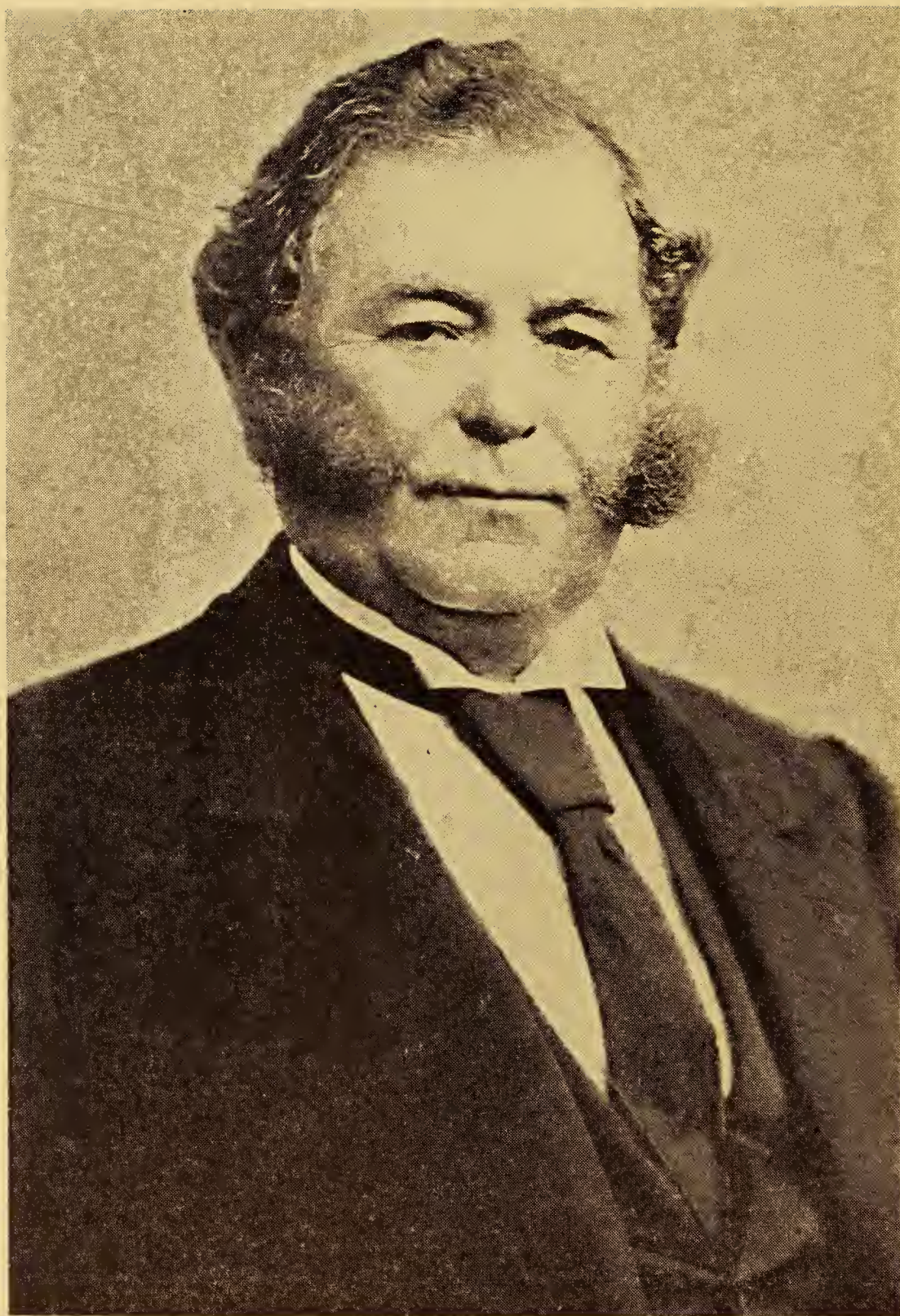
1835.

Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo now becomes the central figure of the history of Sonoma.

In 1833 Governor Figueroa proceeded to obey the special instructions he had received from the Mexican government to push with energy the occupation and settlement of the northern frontier, which meant what is now Marin and Sonoma counties. This was not the first nor the twentieth time that a governor of California had made an effort to force the Russians to leave the province. It proved to be the first time the effort was successful.

Vallejo was made Military Commander and Director of Colonization on the Northern Frontier, a lengthy title that carried heavy responsibilities for a young man of twenty-five years.

But he bore it with dignity as well as pride, and soon made his authority felt in his new jurisdiction.



GENERAL MARIANO GUADALUPE VALLEJO

In the summer of 1833, with a small company of soldiers, General Vallejo made his official tour of the Russian settlements.

Word of his coming and its purpose reached Bodega through the natives, and caused a stir that was quite unlike the usual secure feeling on receiving news of the approach of Californians.

The Russian governor was then at Kuskoff, the inland village on Salmon creek, and when it was reported to him that the new Commandante Generale and his party were nearing the Bodega stronghold, he led a mounted band to meet them and hold a parley.

In one of the passes among the lofty Bodega hills, the two parties of armed horsemen came suddenly in close sight of each other.

A halt was made, and the governor advanced toward the Californians. He was a personage of much bulk and large beard, of years and haughty bearing, and when a tall, youthful figure with fresh, pleasant face with a small dark tuft on either cheek, cantered up to him, he called out: "Who are you? Where is your commander? I want not to talk with boys like you, but with the Commandante Generale Vallejo!"

"Senor Gobernador," smilingly answered the "boy," sweeping off his military headdress, "I

have the honor to be the person you demand to meet. I am the Commandante General Vallejo."

This announcement rather staggered the important Russian official, and he was further and more profoundly taken aback when the virile and resolute Vallejo said to him in substance, while the soldiers of each side sat their horses in silence:

"It is the determination of the Mexican government that the Russian colonists on the California coast be made depart. This is but one of many mandates and warnings to the Russians. Now the time has come to enforce Mexico's supremacy. You are aware that the President of the United States has declared that no European powers may establish colonies in America. You know, also, Senor Gobernador, that California belonged, all of it, to Spain, and the same rights have passed to Mexico. As Commandante Generale on the Northern Frontier, I have to say to you that the Russians must depart from California soil."

General Vallejo returned to the Russian village with the governor, and was hospitably entertained. He went on to Ross and made a survey of the whole situation.

Governor Figueroa sent settlers to the Peta-

luma and Santa Rosa sites, and even came up from Monterey and in person founded a village near where Fulton now stands. But the three embryo pueblos were abandoned because of the hostility of the Indians.

A tribute is due the brave and exalted spirit of Padre Altimira for having successfully located his mission among the Sonoma savages ten years earlier, and with little help or protection from the state.

The valley of Sonoma was now selected by Governor Figueroa, for locating colonists. This was in 1835, and although secularization of the missions had been going on for some years, Sonoma had hardly been disturbed as yet.

Following the instructions sent from the capital, General Vallejo proceeded to lay out and found the pueblo de Sonoma; and the real Mexican occupancy and rule of what is now Sonoma county dates from that time.

Vallejo having given to the new Presidio and Pueblo the name Sonoma, the mission, rather ex-mission, and now parish church, became commonly called the Sonoma Mission. Its full name began to appear in the church records as the Church of San Francisco Solano de Sonoma.

CHAPTER XII.

Secularization of the Mission San Francisco Solano de Sonoma

1835.

In the year 1834, General M. G. Vallejo received his instructions for the secularization of the Mission San Francisco Solano de Sonoma.

General Vallejo brought his young wife and babies to this open frontier. We honor Donna Francisca Benicia Vallejo as the first pioneer mother of Sonoma County, who came unafraid into a land populated with tens of thousands of wild Indians, and made her home with her intrepid and able young husband.

For a time, the Vallejo family occupied the larger of the two buildings that flanked the padres' house. This building may be noted as that on the right hand in the picture on the cover of this volume. It fell into disuse many years since, and not a brick of its thick adobe walls can be seen in place now.

Soon the Commandante Generale had a large and commodious mansion of adobe completed.

On its southwest corner he built a tall square-sided tower, or lookout. This part of his adobe was known as the citadel, and from its windows there was a wide view in all directions. At that time, the plaza was clear of trees, being used for a drilling ground for the defenders of Sonoma.



SONOMA IN 1845

General Vallejo Reviewing His Troops. Sketch by Major Sherman

In carrying out the provisions of the Mexican government's secularization law, General Vallejo distinguished himself as the most just, humane, and capable commissioner in California.

To the Indian neophytes he allotted portions of the mission lands and cattle, and they went to their new locations to try to become independent settlers.

But since it was only ten years since they came out of their wild state, they could not be expected to be able to take care of a farm and of their business affairs. Besides, their wild home had provided them with so rich and abundant a variety of foods, and such pleasant outdoor living quarters for almost the whole round year, that to be confined to a few acres, and till and plant in order to raise a crop for food, seemed nothing short of foolish. Why labor when nature offered all her bounty for the taking?

This was the one problem the missionary fathers in California could not solve, because it was unsolvable.

It was chiefly affection for the padres, regard for their teachings, and devotion to the good and just General Vallejo, that held the neophytes to the precincts of the Sonoma mission. Feeling that they did not know how to take care of their stock, and being troubled with the thieving of hostile wild Indians, they brought back their cattle to General Vallejo and asked him to handle them on their account.

This was a trust religiously observed. The General placed the proceeds to the credit of the Indians, and upon this sum they were at liberty to draw at will. The men bought gay colored

blankets, tools, articles for the household. Some of the women indulged in quite fashionable gowns, which they did not always put upon their stout persons in the manner of the mode.

Among the converts at the Sonoma mission was the gigantic Indian chief whose name in the native tongue was Sum-Yet-Ho, which means "The Mighty Arm." This huge warrior ruled the Suysunes, a people numbering 40,000 souls, and inhabiting the northern and eastern shores of San Francisco bay.

When Sum-Yet-Ho became a Christian, his baptismal name was that of the patron saint of the mission, Francisco Solano. He was generally known as Chief Solano, and sometimes as Prince Solano. He remained a fine, high-minded, forth-right half savage and half civilized Christian for the rest of his life.

The brave and faithful Solano lived to see himself a lonely, sorrowful chief with but a remnant of his people to lead and govern. For in 1837 the dread scourge of smallpox was brought by Russians down from their northern settlements to Fort Ross. The malady spread quickly among the Indians and they died by the tens of thousands during the more than two years that the epidemic raged. It is a fact that the estimate made reached

the enormous figure of 75,000 that perished before the plague died out, which seemed to be when there were no more to die. Only the wilder tribes in the mountains survived. Not only in the Sonoma district, but also about the bay shores, and in the great interior valleys, the awful depopulation went on. This explains why the pioneers found so few Indians here to oppose their coming.

The Spaniards in California had resorted to vaccination as soon as the ill news of smallpox at Ross reached them. At Sonoma, Chief Solano was vaccinated, and so became immune. But his people were soon gone—buried in long trenches or burned on funeral pyres, till by 1839 almost none were left.

And so, within fifteen brief years the light of Faith had come to the Indians of Sonoma and Suysun, they had seen their mission life destroyed, then had almost wholly gone to their death of the white man's disease. And, incidentally, the problem of their secularization was solved forevermore.

CHAPTER XIII.

Life at the Presidio and Pueblo De Sonoma 1835-1846.

From Sonoma, at the northern end of El Camino Real, it was 500 miles to San Diego, at the southern end of the same King's Highway. But the founder of Sonoma and Commandante Generale of the great District of Sonoma was well acquainted in almost every place in California occupied by white people.

Born in Monterey in 1808, of Spanish ancestry distinguished since the time of Columbus, Vallejo was intimately associated with the best families of the capital. During his earlier military career, he had visited the Presidios at San Diego, Santa Barbara and San Francisco.

Nearly all of the missions knew him as captain of the band of troopers sent to protect them against cattle raids and other depredations by the wild Indians.

Wherever he went, the handsome, accomplished young officer made warm friends; and when he came to make his residence in the newly



A DONNA OF THIS PERIOD

formed District of Sonoma, he had all the first families on El Camino Real's long way on his visiting list.

Besides the people of quality, Vallejo was held in high regard by those in the ranks of the humbly born. His sense of justice and unction



*Carriage of General M. G. Vallejo, Imported From England
in 1845*

of soul won him the attachment and loyalty of all classes, including the Indians.

Vallejo's marriage was peculiarly fortunate; for, in winning the hand of Donna Francisca Benicia Carrillo, he allied himself with the most famous Spanish family in California, besides uniting with a woman not only of rare beauty

but admirable character, well fitted to take her place at his side.

General Vallejo having taken up his residence at the Presidio of Sonoma, proceeded as Director of Colonization on the Northern Frontier, to do more than establish about him at Sonoma a few settlers and Indian rancheros.

The District of Sonoma comprised all that part of Alta California extending from the Golden Gate to the Oregon country and from the Pacific ocean to the Sacramento river.

The Russians in the Bodega region and Spanish at Sonoma were the only white dwellers in the entire district.

Governor Juan B. Alvarado was a nephew of Vallejo, though of about the same age. He knew and felt the need of giving the pair of young people the comfort and dependence of those near and dear to them, especially in their social life.

Now began the giving of land, granted by Alvarado, and confirmed by Vallejo. The Petaluma Rancho was given Vallejo himself, for several good reasons, one being that by owning it himself the Commandante could have a location convenient to the Petaluma and San Rafael country.

To his own and his wife's relatives he granted

ranchos in the heart of the present Sonoma county.

A number of grants in Marin were given to friends of Vallejo; and, in all, there soon were good neighbors not so far away from Sonoma.

The first rancho dwellings were of rude riven



El Dorado Hotel, Sonoma, One of the Finest Hotels in California in the 40's

timber, occupied till the completion of the adobe house.

These adobes were about as comfortable and convenient as homes could be. They were warm in winter and cool in summer. As a rule, they were buildings of one story, which gave the

housekeeper no wearisome stairs to ascend and descend many times daily.

Furniture for common use was home-made, but well made, while the sets and pieces for the best rooms were of finest wood and workmanship, importations from Europe.

There was a patio with sparkling water and blossoming vines and shrubs, and always the long, shady veranda, the galeria, the Spanish called it.

Hospitality in the Sonoma district had its headquarters under the same roof that the Comandante Generale built for himself. A lover of social intercourse, and the richest man in California, it was General Vallejo's delight to keep open house and lavishly entertain his relatives and friends at his Sonoma residence and at the haciendas on his several grants.

It was easy to stock the larder in those days. The best of meats, from young beeves and sheep to game and fish, was at hand. Orchards, vineyards and gardens gave of their best. Wine of good quality was made, and some spirituous liquors.

Traveling was in the saddle for all the men, the larger boys, sometimes the ladies. Ox-carts having for canopy a sheet or other large piece of

cloth stretched over a frame, were the carriages used to convey the children and their mothers and nurses.

A visit lasted for days or just as long as the guests pleased to stay. The men enjoyed hunting the bear, deer, elk and antelope, while the women visited at home, chatting, sewing, or singing. In the evening, everybody, from the children to the grandparents, danced to the music of the hacienda orchestra, violin, guitar, and harp.

Indian grooms took care of the horses and stables, Indians did the gardening, the housecleaning, the laundry work, the errands, near and far.

At the Commandante's establishment a French chef was retained, and an invitation to the table at which Donna Francisca presided was seldom slighted.

The dress of the Spanish ladies was of rich materials, and remarkable for elegance and imposing display. A lace mantilla was the usual head covering.

The Spanish caballeros had even richer and gayer attire, and their horses were caparisoned in embroidered leather trappings and silver-mounted bridles and spurs.

When riding parties went abroad, usually one

or two of the gentlemen played on the guitar, the horses stepping rhythmically to the music. The instrument was secured by a strap passed over the player's shoulder.

Life passed well and pleasantly enough in Sonoma and its environments during the first ten years of its existence.

What of the Sonoma Mission during the same decade? Once more General Vallejo's hand appears, for it was he who caused the restoration of the Mission, and entertained Padre Quijas when he came up from San Rafael to hold services at the parish church of St. Francisco Solano.

CHAPTER XIV.

The Russian Princess Helena Christens a Coast Range Mountain

1841.

A beautiful young bride of royal blood arrived at Fort Ross early in 1841. She was the Princess Helena de Gagarine, niece of the Czar of Russia, and newly wedded to the Count Alexander Rotcheff, governor-general of Siberia and the Russian colonies on the shores of the North Pacific.

Two Russian warships brought the royal party down to Ross, after making a leisurely survey of the coast all the way from Sitka.

On arriving at Ross, the Princess arranged an expedition into the interior, which should include the ascent of the lone mountain rising high above the range forming the eastern horizon.

The Princess had read the fascinating descriptions of California which the Russian navigator, Kotzebue, had given in his report to the Czar after visiting California in 1805.

It was this glowing tale of Kotzebue's that brought the Russians to settle at Ross and Bodega, and that now led the Czar's niece and the Governor-General of the Pacific side of the Russian empire to make the Russian settlements in California the objective of their honeymoon trip. It was a desire to see the beautiful inland valley described by Kotzebue that inspired Helena to plan her famous excursion.

The party consisted of the Princess, and Governor Rotcheff; Dr. W. A. Wossnessenski, a Russian naturalist attached to the royal party; E. L. Tchernich, proprietor of a large ranch near Bodega Bay, and an old friend of Dr. Wossnessenski; and Manuel Macintosh, grantee from Alvarado, of the Rancho Estero Americano, and quite friendly with his Russian neighbors, whom he was expected to block in their territorial ambitions. A small guard of soldiers and an Indian guide completed the party.

It was June, and the party rode merrily and without mishap through the coast hill gaps and across the fair plain we call the valley of Santa Rosa, on again among the hills to the northeast till it reached the base of the lofty mountain.

Next day, the 20th of June, the Princess and her companions ascended through the tough

brush, the jumbled blocks of tufa and lumps of scoria, while rattlesnakes hissed and deer darted out of range. At length the intrepid explorers came out upon the long, rounded top of the mountain.

From the highest point, the north peak, the royal couple saw what it may well have been calculated at Ross could be seen from this lone elevation, this 5000-foot natural lookout—the features and general aspect of the fair, long coveted District of Sonoma.

To the farthest north, a glittering white point—that was the great peak of the Shastas. All along the eastern horizon stood the mighty wall of the dark Sierra Nevadas, their serrated ridge patched with snow, only one cleft visible, where the Truckee flows through. At the southern end of the wall a cluster of the loftiest peaks—we call it the Whitney group.

Along the western horizon lay the blue line of the Pacific. Glimpses of the great interior valleys, the bays within the Golden Gate, the peaks of Diablo, Tamalpais, the Coast Range to the north, the nearer valleys and hills, all these the two high representatives of Russian power looked upon, and if they called it good for Russia to possess, their understanding and judgment were

not at fault. They were devoted to their country, and since other nations had made might serve as right, why not Russia, above all since this magnificent land lay idle and undeveloped? Russia was ready and able to colonize it, and its possession was absolutely necessary if the Russian settlements in Alaska were to be provisioned and maintained.

Russia was at the time, stronger in the Pacific than Mexico and the United States combined.

"It is a grand country," exclaimed Helena, "a country fit to build into a splendid new dominion of the Empire."

Turning to the soldiers, "Come, raise the flag of Russia on this watchtower God set above the beautiful land of California. Let our colors fly here, as I pray they yet may over all this territory that only wild men and wild beasts now occupy."

A limb was cut from a solitary, lightning-blasted pine, and trimmed into a fairly good pole, and upon it was fastened a small Russian flag.

"Now to place the plate," the Princess ordered.

An embedded tufa block was selected, and this was tooled into a circular shape, and its top dressed to level. Three pieces of tufa were cut

to set closely together round the east side of the central block. The space on the west side was packed with loose rock to complete the little cairn.

Then the plate was brought and nailed down securely upon the center of the block, with some of the stout, sharp nails the Ross shops turned out. Tufa is but cleaved volcanic ash, and a Ross nail driven by a Russ hand would not fail to penetrate into it.

Now, all the party being assembled, the Princess Helena de Gagarine advanced and stood before the new-made landmark, while all the others uncovered and reverently knelt.

Raising her right hand toward heaven, Helena proclaimed: "In the name of the Holy Trinity, Father," stooping and touching the nearest of the three supporting stones, "Son," touching the second, "Holy Ghost," touching the third, "I christen this mountain Saint Helena, in honor of the patron saint of our Imperial Mistress, Helena, Empress of Russia."

A salute was fired, and a farewell spoken to the little flag that soon would be blown to shreds, and to the gleaming copper plate that the elements would soon blacken.

In the afternoon sunshine, the Princess Helena

was guided safely down the mountain she had, with high hopes, christened for her aunt and namesake, lone, romantic Mount Saint Helena.

CHAPTER XV.

Chief Solano Captures the Russian Party

A startling adventure awaited the Princess Helena de Gagarine's exploring party, on its homeward journey.

Word had reached Sonoma that Russian war-ships were at Ross, and that a party from Ross had passed northward over the trail that ran between Petaluma and Santa Rosa.

Fear of an attempt by the Russians to encroach farther into the district was felt, not only by the Commandante Vallejo, but also by Chief Solano and his Indians.

Donna Francisca was ill, and her devoted husband did not want to leave her. He sent his brother, Don Salvador, and some Spanish soldiers, with Chief Solano and his armed warriors, to reconnoiter.

The Sonoma force rode swiftly northward till the trail was reached, near the present city of Santa Rosa. Here they waited in retired positions.

The Indians' hearts were full of hatred of the land-seeking Russians, the bugbear of their good

friend, the General,—the plague-breeding Russians from whom had come the frightful small-pox that had swept away nearly all their tribe.

Toward evening the Russian riders came in sight, the central figure a blithe and lovely young woman.

Chief Solano, posted at the upper end of his line of braves, seeing so few to oppose him, and a beautiful woman within his power, suddenly rose and gave a signal, and in an instant the riding party was surrounded by several hundred hostile savages, many with guns ready aimed.

Instantly the Russians pulled out their weapons. A bloody slaughter was stopped only by the hallooing of Don Salvador, who came galloping up. He begged the Russians not to fire, lest they draw destruction upon themselves, and offered to do all he could to protect them. He then spoke to Solano, and asked him what he was intending to do with the Russians.

“The men—I will have their throats cut. The woman—we shall keep her.”

“Nothing must be done without the sanction of El Commandante Generale Vallejo,” declared Don Salvador, and held Solano to this order. He sent a soldier back to Sonoma at top speed, with

a note telling the general of the capture, and begging him to come at once with aid.

At early morning, General Vallejo with seventy-five troopers, all dressed in handsome embroidered leather uniforms, galloped into the camp of Solano and his prisoners.

It took but a few minutes of quiet conference apart from the others, for the General to convince his ally that he should release the Russians. Solano gave an order to his people, and like magic the Indians vanished from sight.

The royal Helena showed her dauntless spirit then, as she had during the long night of danger. Words of delight at her gallant rescue, and admiration for her dashing rescuers, rippled from her lips. She was all smiles and gracious exclamations.

General Vallejo and his soldiers escorted the Russians back to Ross. To make sport for the Princess, the troopers performed feats of horsemanship, which the lady warmly applauded.

But most of Helena's attention was given to the magnetic personality who rode beside her, the commander of the District of Sonoma, who was boldly and nobly striving to hold for Mexico that fair domain against Russia's desire to possess it.

It is not known if Helena told this man who had that day saved her and her companions from the vengeful hands of Solano, that she had ascended the sentinel mountain of his jurisdiction and given it a Russian christening, which



The Greek Orthodox Chapel at Fort Ross, Built 1812

embraced the dedication of a memorial tablet. It is entirely unlikely that she made the revelation.

But that this spirited and high-souled woman must have been moved to make a momentous

resolve, is apparent from her parting words to General Vallejo:

“I had wished the Czar of Russia to possess this country. But I have come to feel differently, and now I hope that California will ever remain to you and to your people.”

The Princess Helena de Gagarene departed for St. Petersburg, and it was not long till the Czar sent orders to the Pacific for the immediate withdrawal of all his subjects from California, and by the beginning of 1842, Bodega and Ross were abandoned.

The tablet was removed from its place on Mount St. Helena, in May, 1853, by Dr. T. A. Hylton, of Petaluma, who ascended the mountain when on a prospecting trip.

Dr. Hylton gave the plate into the hands of San Francisco parties, and through them it was placed in the museum of the Society of California Pioneers, which was destroyed in the great fire of April, 1906.

But its finder had made a paper fac-simile of the plate for his friend, the late venerated pioneer, H. L. Weston, of Petaluma.

Mr. Weston, in time, forgot that he possessed the relic. But a clew to its existence and where-



*HONORIA TUOMEY
At the Restoration Monument*

abouts was discovered by one devoted to the study of Sonoma county history.

This local historian visited Mr. Weston, then in his 86th year, and the octagonal bit of yellowed paper was finally unearthed, and presented to the happy historian, after Mr. Weston had

penned on its reverse side his certification of the transfer.

The historian, with the valuable aid and counsel of several competent persons, made ready a marble memorial tablet, which was placed with proper ceremonies upon the north peak of Mount St. Helena, in 1912, the centenary of the founding of Fort Ross.

CHAPTER XVI.

The Bear Flag Revolution

1846.

The story of what is known as the Bear Flag Revolution is one that, even after the lapse of three-quarters of a century, is still told rather according to the partisan attitude of the teller.

Some writers on our State and county history roundly condemn the Revolution as a piece of crude political maneuvering on the part of Capt. John C. Fremont, while others have only praise for the whole incident.



CAPT. JOHN C. FREMONT

A still live dispute within the main controversy has to do with the making of the Bear flag, — who furnished certain of the materials, who designed and constructed the flag, and just what the original flag looked like.

Whether all of the facts ever will be known

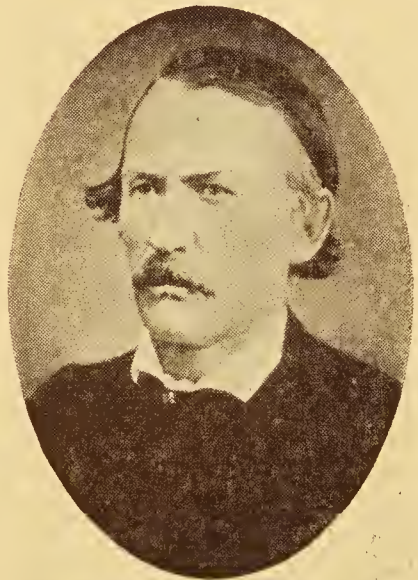
is doubtful. Whether, if they are unearthed, and should reflect on Capt. Fremont and the Bear Flag Party, they will be wholly welcomed in this State, is a question. For California, years ago, adopted the Bear Flag as the emblem of her strength, fearlessness, and aggressiveness, and both her venerable pioneers and her native sons and daughters hold to the symbol of the Bear, California's idealized native wild creature.

The most generally accepted version of the Bear Flag episode is here presented.

In the spring of 1846, Capt. John C. Fremont was in California with a force of men. Fremont claimed that he was on a scientific expedition, and Governor Castro gave him permission to be in the country for such a purpose.

The famous guide, Kit Carson, was with Fremont on this expedition. Castro became suspicious, and ordered Fremont to leave the country.

Fremont started for Oregon, but was overtaken by a messenger bringing him letters from the Secre-



CHRISTOPHER CARSON
(Kit Carson)

tary of State at Washington. What those letters contained, has never, it is said, been revealed. They perished that night in a camp uproar caused while repelling an Indian attack. But Fremont had already read them.

Next day Fremont returned to the Sacramento valley and encamped. Here he was visited by the American settlers from far and near, for consultation, since a report was abroad that Governor Castro with a strong force of cavalry, was on the march to attack them.

A party of men rode away from Fremont's camp, and on the morning of June 14, captured the town of Sonoma. General Vallejo and his brother, Don Salvador, and brother-in-law, Jacob Leese, and Col. Victor Prudon, were taken to the fort of Capt. John A. Sutter, in the Sacramento valley, where they were detained for nearly two months.



JAMES GREGSON
Guard of Gen. Vallejo at Sutter's
Fort

When Castro learned that a force of Americans was holding the garrison at

Sonoma, he issued a proclamation, calling upon his countrymen to rise and drive the marauders from the country.

Whereupon, William B. Ide, in charge at Sonoma, issued a counter proclamation to the American settlers at Sonoma—for quite a number had come to live there, being most kindly received by General Vallejo, who was a great admirer of the United States—calling them to assemble at Sonoma and assist in establishing a republican form of government.

As the party that captured the quite empty garrison at Sonoma had no authority for the act from the United States, but only the encouragement of Fremont, it could not raise the flag of the United States.

So it was decided that an independent state should be proclaimed, after the example of Texas.

A committee set to work to plan and make a flag.

A yard and a quarter of unbleached domestic of her own weaving in her former home in the East, was obtained from Mrs. John Sears. A piece of red flannel was gotten from another

source—some say from a petticoat hanging on a clothesline. A pot of brown paint and a brush being brought, the flag making was left to the skill of William Todd.

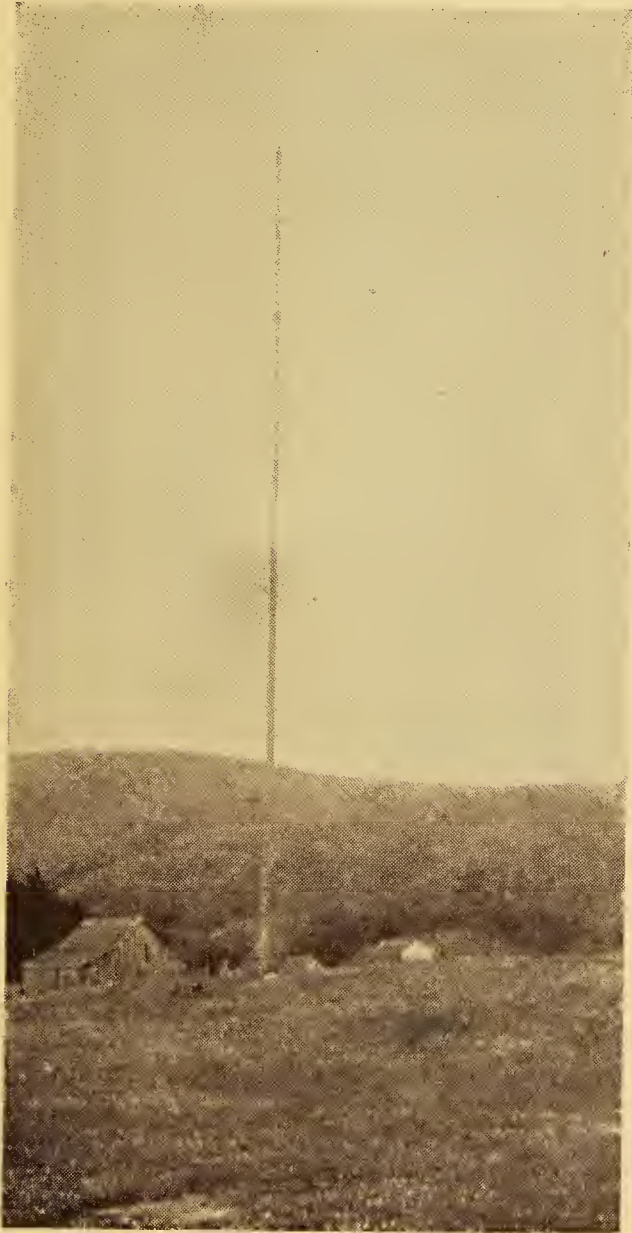
The Bear Flag went aloft on the plaza flag-pole, and fluttered in the breeze till the morning of July 9th.

Fremont and his men and a number of settlers gathered near. What Fremont read in those letters received by him, and destroyed in the Indian fight, he still did not reveal. But he acted like a man waiting for some great event to happen, and hoping it would hasten to happen.

There was dire need for a favorable turn to affairs, for Castro was gathering a large force, and sure as he caught the Bear Flag men, every one would have been shot or hanged.

Up from the southern waters of the Pacific a battleship was coming under full sail, with the American flag aloft. When it reached Monterey, the flag of Mexico was lowered on the custom house staff, and the Stars and Stripes raised. California was taken as a war prize; for the United States was at war with Mexico—Fremont's waiting was at an end.

On the 9th day of July there arrived at the Embarcadero below Sonoma the ship's boat of the U. S. S. Portsmouth, then in the bay of San Francisco.



*Flagpole on Bodega Rancho Erected
by Capt. Smith in 1843*

Lieut. Joseph Warren Revere and his guard entered Sonoma, and received a joyful welcome from the greatly relieved Bear Flag men and the people of the town in general.

Soon the Bear Flag came down and the flag of the United States went up, amid a scene of gladness and enthusiasm.

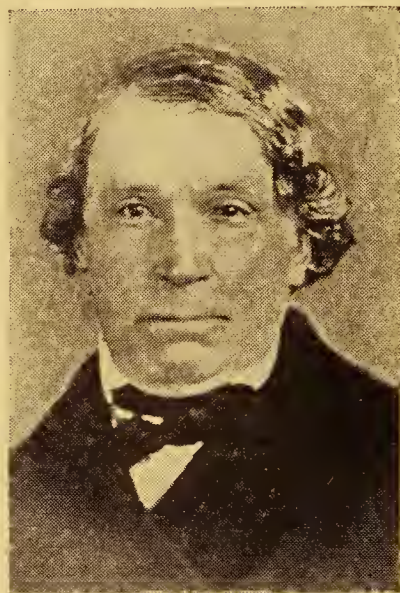
Next morning Lieut. Revere sent

Samuel Kelsey to the Bodega Rancho with a flag for Captain Smith to raise over his wide domain, and another by John York to Captain Sutter to raise at his fort.

Soon, through efforts initiated by Capt. J. B. Montgomery of the U. S. S. Portsmouth, and Consul Thomas O. Larkin, the ranking officer, Commodore Stockton, ordered an immediate release of General Vallejo and the others detained at Sutter's Fort.

Most of the members of the Bear Flag party made their homes in Sonoma county. Some became prominent in public affairs. Much attention was shown them, and they were among the guests of honor at patriotic celebrations.

The last survivor of the episode was the late James McChristian, who passed away at Sebastopol in June, 1914.



CAPT. STEPHEN SMITH
Settled at Bodega in 1843



CAPT. J. B. MONTGOMERY
U. S. S. Portsmouth, 1846



U. S. S. FORTSMOUTH

CHAPTER XVII.

Sonoma After 1846

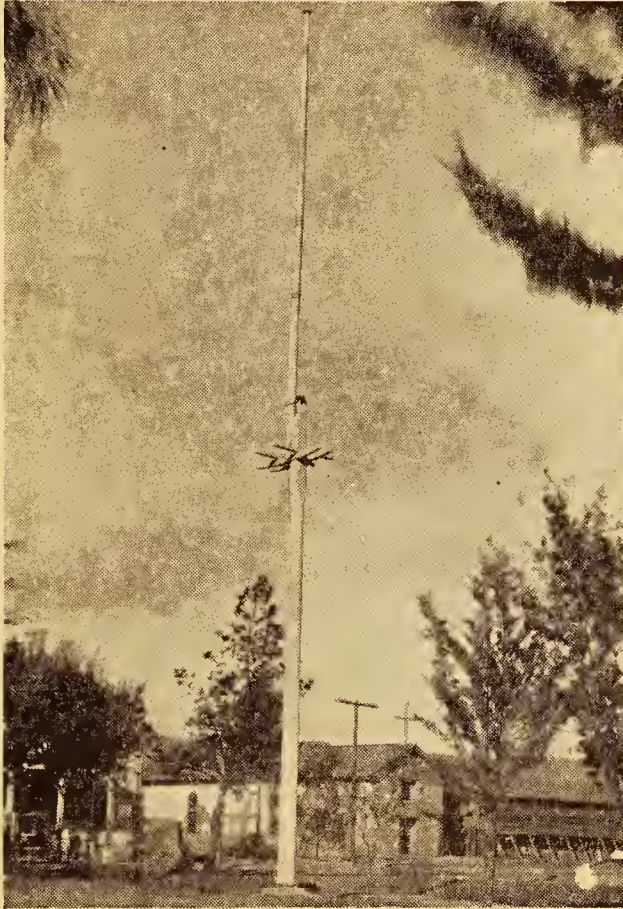
The pueblo of Sonoma was a dull and sad place during most of the year following the conquest of California. For war was going on, up and down California, between the United States troops and the Californians, who had become inflamed against the Americans because of the ill treatment received at the hands of some of the troops, chiefly the irregulars.

Peace came in 1847, and California spent its last year as a pastoral land, a land of romance and serene days, of pleasant idling and indifference to commercial life.

Gold was found at Coloma in 1848, the gold rush began, and within two years California was fairly swarming with gold seekers from other lands, eager, adventurous, of every class of society.

General Vallejo was again the chief figure in Sonoma. His good example in dealing in a friendly and peaceable manner with all Americans helped to make easier the change to the new order.

The Vallejo home was again the center of



Bear Flag Pole and Mission San Francisco Solano

social life and hospitality, and here the American officers were received and made welcome.

General Vallejo did not become a miner, but remained at Sonoma and looked after his large land holdings. He was as kind and helpful as ever toward weary new arrivals looking for a home. His influence kept peace among the Californians, Americans, and Indians under Chief Solano.

The year 1849 found Vallejo and many other prominent men at Monterey, framing a Constitution for California. Major Jacob R. Snyder, who held posts of distinction during the Mexican war, was a delegate, as was also the widely-known surveyor and civil engineer, Jasper O'Farrell.

After statehood, Sonoma was classed as a city. Its first mayor was the Hon. John Cameron, who



HON. JOHN CAMERON
Mayor of Sonoma 1850-52

served a second term, and did honor to himself and the city by the capable manner in which he conducted the affairs of the new-old municipality.

The two-storied adobe that stands on the west side of the plaza was, from 1850 to 1854, the Sonoma county courthouse and jail.

The bustling little town of Santa Rosa, an infant of three years, won, in a special election in the fall of 1854, the county seat away from Sonoma.

Among famous military men who were stationed at Sonoma, or visited there, at one time or another, were U. S. Grant, Wm. T. Sherman, Philip Sheridan, Percifer F. Smith, Jos. Hooker,

and Henry W. Halleck, all of whom won fame later in the Civil War. When at Sonoma, they were often entertained at the mansion built in



*LACHRYMA MONTIS, SONOMA, CAL.
Home of General M. G. Vallejo, Built in 1850*

1850 by General Vallejo, and called by him Lachryma Montis, or "Mountain Tears," because of the large springs of hot and cold water that issue from the hillside near by.

A list of the pioneers of Sonoma would be long and full of honored names. Descendants of some of these pioneers still dwell in Sonoma in homes seventy-five years old.

Over fifty years ago the first railroad came, and Sonoma grew more modern.

Several memorable celebrations have taken place in Sonoma in honor of its historic past, and monuments and plaques have been placed.

Sonoma has, in recent years, developed and



CITY HALL, SONOMA

grown, till now it has a number of large and handsome modern structures, including churches, civic buildings, schools, grammar and high, hotels, club quarters, and business blocks.

The region near Sonoma abounds in mineral springs, and several large resorts have been built up.

A last word on the life of the founder of Sonoma :

General Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo passed away in 1890, and his wife the year following. Side by side they sleep on an eminence north of the town, and quite near to *Lachryma Montis*. The old home is now occupied by a younger daughter, Mrs. Luisa Vallejo Emparan, and her son, R. R. Emparan.



LUISA VALLEJO EMPARAN
Daughter of General M. A. Vallejo

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Mission San Francisco Solano de Sonoma in Its Centenary Year

1923.

The centenary year of the Mission San Francisco Solano de Sonoma finds the original chapel and padres' house, the only remaining buildings, well restored.

For about twenty-five years after California became a part of the United States, the Mission was the property of the Archdiocese of San Francisco, and services were held there regularly.

Then, for a generation more, the mission was in private hands, and put to utilitarian uses. Some of the buildings and nearly all of the wall of the quadrangle were removed or allowed to go to ruin.

In 1903 the State of California bought the Sonoma Mission and made an appropriation for a beginning toward its restoration and care. Other appropriations have been made since, and the Mission of Padre Altimira's founding seems

destined to celebrate more than its first centenary of existence.

To the constant interest and well-directed efforts of State Senator Herbert W. Slater of Santa Rosa is due a large share of the credit for the transfer of the fast disintegrating Sonoma Mission to the State. To him, again, is largely due the appropriating of the several sums received from the State toward the restoration and care of the property.

Of the splendid work done by the devoted and energetic men and women of Sonoma a great deal could be said. The Sonoma Valley Woman's Club is an organization of which any municipality or community might be justly proud. It has done a great deal for Sonoma.

Sonoma has had for half a century, a second church of St. Francis Solano. But it is known as St. Francis' church. Its location is diagonally across the beautiful plaza from the Mission church.

Upon a large plot of ground a wooden church was erected. It was an artistic structure and exceptionally well finished and furnished.

This church was destroyed by fire a generation ago. One irreparable loss was that of the articles presented by the Russians to Padre Altimira for

service in the Mission San Francisco Solano, on the occasion of its dedication in 1824.

Another Church of St. Francis, erected on the site of the first, stood till 1922, when fire again left the parish without a place of worship.

The hovering spirit of the good St. Francis Solano must have moved pastor and flock to erect for their newest temple in his honor, a church modeled on those of the days of Padre Serra and Padre Altimira: the large and stately stucco edifice that is now nearing completion is a model of fidelity to the style of architecture of the original Franciscan Missions.

About it there are reminders of San Luis Rey, San Carlos, San Gabriel Arcangel, and San Buenaventura.

It was a memorable occasion that included the blessing of the marble cornerstone on which is carved this inscription in Latin:

ECCLESIA SANCTI
FRANCISCI SOLANI
MCMXXIII.

Echoes of those far days when the new Mission San Francisco de Assis was founded come as we tell that it was the pastor from Santa Rosa, Father John M. Cassin, that officiated on the

solemn yet joyful occasion as the personal representative of the Most Reverend Edward J. Hanna, Archbishop of San Francisco; that the pastor of St. Raphael's church, in the city where the Mission San Rafael Arcangel once stood, preached the sermon; that Father J. F. Byrne is the pastor of St. Francis' church, of whose first flock the shepherd was the Padre Jose Altimira.



*Cross Erected to First Christianized Indians in Northern California
Bodega Rancho, 1923*

man ✓

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